## *The Scope of Applied Linguistics.*

## 1- What is Applied Linguistics?

Among the post-war remedies for the betterment of foreign language teaching, applied linguistics has attracted the greatest attention. The term 'applied linguistics' seems to have originated in the United States in the l940's. Persons with an obvious desire to be identified as scientists rather than humanists first used it; the association with 'applied science' can hardly have been accidental. The creation of applied linguistics as a discipline represents an effort to find practical applications for 'modern scientific linguistics'. The use of the term has now become crystallized in the names of schools, language centers, reviews, books and articles.

### *A- Problem-Solving Activity.*

1 - The process of planning and designing can be seen as the making of a series of logically interrelated and dependent decisions. We refer to these decisions as answers to specific questions.

2- The questions are answered according to the principles or knowledge derived from the scientific study of the structure of language, how it is learned and its role in society.

3- The formulation of the question and the analysis of the problems which arise in the planning of a language-teaching operation are themselves part of applied linguistics. The applied linguist is not only a consultant called in when difficulties arise; he is the person who has to ask the questions in the first place, who identifies the problems and specifies their nature.

## B- Language Teaching Operation.

It has two main aspects:

1- The first level is concerned with the political and economic decisions. These are related to such questions as:

- Whether to teach languages.
- Which languages to teach.
- To whom to teach them.

2- The second level is much more related to questions that are very precise: - What to teach? How to teach it? To answer these two important questions one should follow the procedure of needs analysis.

## C- Needs Analysis.

The content and structure of a syllabus relate to the objectives of the learner or of society, and these must necessarily be specified in the first place in socio- and psycholinguistic terms i.e. what the learner wants or must be able to do in terms of social behaviour and linguistic performance.

For example:

1- To analyze the problem in terms of the categories of speech functions: - To ask questions. - Issue challenges. - Pronounce judgments in the target language.

2- To analyze the problem in some psycholinguistic terms of skills: to read, write or speak the foreign language.

Thus, the question, what to teach, closely links to the determination of the content of a syllabus on linguistic, sociolinguistic, or psycholinguistic criteria:

- Linguistic Aspect: - Sets of categories and rules; - Lists of lexical items; - Lists of sounds, rhythmical sequences and intonation patterns.
- Sociolinguistic Aspect: - Speech acts; - Speech functions.
- Psycholinguistic Aspect: - Sets of skills (to read, to speak, to write etc...); language activities.

## II- S. Pit Corder's Levels of Application.

The language teaching operation has three main aspects or levels of application:

1- The first level is concerned with the ***political decisions*** (government); these relate to such questions as:

- Whether to teach languages or not.
- Which languages to teach.
- The money available to realize these aims (to be provided or not).
- How to use the funds if afforded (training fees and paying teachers).
- Economic, administrative, and social considerations.
- Duration (how lone).
- Objectives (what macro and micro purposes?).
- Population (to whom?).

2- The second level is concerned with the ***linguistic aspect***: the actual intervention of the applied linguist. It relates to such questions as what to teach and how to teach it. The applied linguist should create syllabuses taking into account the following points:

- Programs applied on the local or national level.
- Specific languages.
- Specific groups of learners.
- Specific purposes.
- Specific limitations of time and money.

3- The third level directly relates to ***the classroom and the teacher***: the application of the syllabuses elaborated by the applied linguist. This aspect is particularly connected to questions such as:

- How people learn foreign/second languages? Psychological and psycholinguistic matters (motivation, attitudes, intelligence, personality etc.).
- How to teach? Pedagogic matters (strategies and methods).
- Devising lessons: teachers and applied linguists prepare materials and textbooks for language teaching (as a collective enterprise).

The language teaching operation should be the result of a compromise: in other words, the co-operation of all contributors in the three levels is necessary.

The primary application necessitates the implication of not only the linguist, but also the sociolinguist and the psycholinguist. It is obvious that a close collaboration of the concerned scientists is primordial, with regard to some important issues, including the type of data to incorporate in the analysis, the status of the foreign language inside the host society. The analysis of the first language may also be fruitful to second language teaching and to the study of the different cognitive processes involved in language learning.

Further Readings:

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